

BY JP O'NEIL, CLIPPER INTERN

Entering his sixth year, Duxbury Public Schools Superintendent Ben Tantillo knows what it takes to be an administrator.

Tantillo is a passionate and determined person who has risen up the ranks.

"I always have a five year plan, where I want to be in five years," Tantillo said. "From when I was a teacher I wanted to be a head coach, and after I finished coaching I wanted to become a school administrator, then from assistant principal to principal, and from principal to superintendent."

Tantillo graduated from West Virginia Wesleyan College, majoring in physical education and history.

"When I graduated we all took a lot of extra courses because teaching jobs were hard to come by," Tantillo said. "You had to be certified in a lot of different areas. So along with my majors, I became certified in English and strengthened my coaching skills to prepare myself for a job."

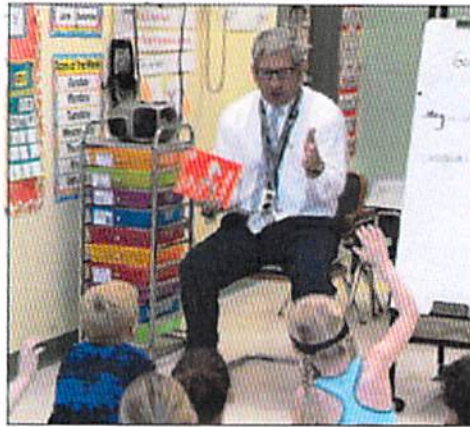
These certifications and his commitment are what allowed Tantillo to blossom from his first job as an eighth grade English teacher, to a head football and head baseball coach, to an athletic director, to a principal, and now to superintendent.

At Duxbury High School, a typical day for Tantillo consists of checking emails, the calendar, responding to phone calls, responding to emails, going to meetings and, if there is time in the day, visiting one of the schools.

"There is almost always something that comes up, whether it's physical plan, staff issue, or student issue," Tantillo said. "We do a lot of planning too, especially for our budget. That takes a lot of time. There also is planning for professional development, overseeing curriculum reviews and things of that nature."

Tantillo said he and the rest of the administration are always looking for ways to improve the already impressive school system. With the new school and technology, the advances from last year are already being felt by all students and faculty members. All schools are now wireless, and there are iPads at Chandler, iPads and laptops at Alden, and laptops throughout the middle

and high school. "The new technology has been great and the machines



Dr. Tantillo reads to some young scholars.



Duxbury Public School administrators received a grant from the Duxbury Education Foundation in May 2015.

Photos by Karen Wong

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have held up," Tantillo said. "We tripled our capacity for the network to cover the whole school district too."

Another big change that has taken place since Tantillo became an administrator regards school safety.

"I was a high school principal when Columbine came down and it was very upsetting for me," Tantillo said. "We never used to have lockdowns, and things of that nature, and now that is just part of our yearly process. It's really a shame. You feel so responsible for all the students and staff every single minute and second that they're here. That has made my job more emotional."

In the past, Tantillo has been very active in his local communities.

“I was a CCD teacher for 16 years, the president of the lions club, president of the little league, and on the board of directors for the YMCA camp,” he said. “And I have coached my children in soccer, baseball, and football.”

If Tantillo had not become an administrator, he’d most want to be a CEO of a business. His favorite ice cream flavor is chocolate chip and favorite sports team is the New York Yankees.

Tantillo raised his three daughters and son in New Jersey, but now that they are all in their 20s and early 30s.

“They live all across the country,” Tantillo said. “One lives in Boston, one lives in Portland, Oregon, one lives in Manhattan and my youngest son lives in West Virginia.”

Looking into the future, Tantillo would like to see the high school having a variety of assessments rather than just the classic pen and paper test.

“Students should be able to show what they learned through a video, a podcast, writing a song, creating a puzzle, a simulation, or a debate,” Tantillo said. “And I would like to see our seniors, do outside of school endeavours like internships, maybe take a college course in the afternoon, things of that nature.”

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